

Statement of John Joseph Moakley  
Ranking Minority Member of the Rules Committee  
on the Rules Committee budget request  
March 7, 2001

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Hoyer, members of the Committee. It is a pleasure to be here this afternoon with my dear friend, David Dreier, to present to you our budget request for the Committee on Rules. I know that you have heard from almost all the other committees so I won't take up much of your time. David has made a very thorough presentation with which I agree. I only want to touch on a few items.

As you know Mr. Chairman, the Rules Committee is one of the most partisan committees in the House. We might lead the House in the number of battles that we have. But I think we also lead the House in the number of jokes per meeting. The Committee is proof of that old adage "just because we disagree doesn't mean we have to be disagreeable." Nowhere is that more evident than when it comes to the administration of the Committee.

When we were in the majority, I was extremely proud of my predecessor's non-partisan administration of the Committee. When I became Chairman, I was pleased to carry forward the long-standing commitment of providing the minority 1/3 of committee salary funds. Mr. Chairman, just because the other party is in the minority doesn't mean it doesn't have a right to have adequate resources.

And, Mr. Chairman, I must say that our practice held us in good stead in 1994 when the Republicans took control of Congress. My good friend, Jerry Solomon, continued the practice of a non-partisan administration of the committee. He provided us with almost 1/3 of the committee slots and 1/3 of the dollars necessary to fund those slots. I was very happy to see David carry this practice forward.

Now where David has parted from Jerry's and my practice is in asking for a modest increase in the committee budget.

Last Congress we requested an increase to accommodate both an increase in salaries as well as a major upgrade in the Committee's equipment and computer systems. That upgrade has been very successful.

This Congress, David and I are requesting another modest increase, again primarily to address salary issues. As you know, the overwhelming percentage of our budget goes to staff salaries. I think we have one of the most dedicated staffs in the House. They have a specialized knowledge that is built up over the years and we need to do our best to keep these people working in the House.

That being said, I am sure that David is not the only Chairman facing increased salary demands as the new Administration gets into place. In fact, I know that David has lost several of his key staff to the Administration and competition for qualified replacements is going to be stiff.

On my side of the equation, I don't have a turn-over issue. In fact, my staff is just the opposite. The professional staff that I have been able to assemble has been together since 1989, when I became Chairman. Many started on my subcommittee staff, while others started with Chairman Pepper and Gillis Long. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I would wager that, with an average tenure of 18 years of Committee experience, the Democratic staff on the Rules Committee is one of the most stable on the Hill.

Mr. Chairman, in order to keep these folks from being lured into the private sector or the Administration, we need to be competitive. This budget proposal allows us to do that.

Mr. Chairman, I would add that David has done a marvelous job on the Committee web-site. I would encourage you all to look at it. In my mind it is what a committee web-site should be—factual and educational. In

fact, Mr. Chairman, we have seen no need to request a minority page. My hope is that this will continue in the future.

Let me conclude by reiterating that we on the Democratic side of the Rules Committee are very supportive of the request that Mr. Dreier and I present to you this afternoon. On that note, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to answer any questions that you might have.